Publications Committee

553-712-1m-1624

# BULLETIN

of

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

**Number 219.**

Published four times a month
By the University of Texas
At Austin, Texas

**Press Series 21 Feb. ~~May~~ 15, 1912**

Entered at Austin, Texas, as second-class matter, under Act of Congress of July 16, 1894.

The Bulletin for the Press is published twice a month by the University of Texas for the purpose of furnishing items of interest regarding University affairs. The press is invited to make free use of these items with or without giving credit therefor.

**Please forward to the Secretary of the University papers containing any of this matter.**

**Issued August 1, to correct series number.**

President R. B. Cousins of the West Texas State Normal, who was a regular attendant at the meetings of the Rural School Educational Conference held during the third week in July at the University of Texas, said that had there been as many as one hundred county superintendents at the exercises the week would have been worth half a million dollars to the State. The date of the Conference fell this year at just the tihe when many superintendents were in the thick of the fight to retain their positions. Next year is an off year politically, and it is the full expectation of the promoters of Rural Education Week to see a goodly proportion of the men most responsible for the advancement of education in the country in regular attendance. It might prove a good investment for each county to send its representative at public expense.

## HELP FOR THE COUNTRY SCHOOLS.

A sheaf of information gathered during rural school education work at the summer school of the University of Texas:

### NATURE STIDY.

Some interesting personal experiences of how the difficulties of teaching ill-equipped country schools has been overcome were told in the papers and round table discussions that made up Rural School Education Week at the University of Texas in July. The great bug-a-boo of the little one-room, one-teacher school is discipline—a hard matter, of course, when one teacher has both to teach and to control as many as forty children of so many different grades of advancement that no one recitation can have more time than seven minutes, and often as little as three.

At the end of the first day in such a position one young man sat down with his elbows on his desk to consider what to do. It looked hopeless. The proverbial bad boy had appeared, and the rest of the children looked listless as if they might quit school upon the least excuse. As an experiment, he decided to take up nature study—not out of books, because he nor his pupils had the money to buy them, but study of the fields and woods of his own district. From the start the new study had one big advantage: All the forty children could work at the same time on the same subject telling or writing or learning about the birds or the weeds or the insects of the neighborhood. Next, specimens of these things began to decorate the walls, and the restless boy used his energy in chasing a grasshopper where he had spent it in pranks that kept everybody else from working. And often when lessons went well and quietly, books were piled on the desks and teacher and pupils went for a hike in the woods.

At the end of the year the young man found that his simple experiment in nature study had netted him four distinct advantages: Discipline had no great trouble; the children liked school so well that they attended regularly; the patrons wanted him for another year; and to get him they were willing to pay him more and to equip his school better.

## WHERE HOME CHORES COUNT.

During one of his interesting talks Mr. C. H. Lane of the Department of Agriculture at Washington told the delegates to the Rural Educational Conference at the University of Texas of a unique plan that is being tried out in Oregon in a number of the country schools. The plan costs no money, takes little school time, and brings the school and home into closer touch. The mother and father are recognized as teachers, and the school teacher is put into the position of one who cares for all the habits and tastes of the child. Every home has equipment for industrial work; many schools can not afford any money for such equipment. Why not combine the two?

Briefly, the plan, originated by L. R. Alderman, State Superintendent of Public Instruction of Oregon, is this: To give school credit for each little task done at home. For example—if the boy or girl builds the fire at home in the morning he is given five minutes credit; milks the cow, five minutes; cleans the horse, ten minutes; splits and carries in a twelve-hour supply of wood, ten minutes; feeds the chickens, five minutes; makes and bakes the bread, one hour; makes biscuits, ten minutes; washes and wipes the dishes, fifteen minutes. To show that the school is vitally interested in the sanitation that means good health, five minutes credit is allowed for each brushing of the teeth, and another five minutes for merely sleeping in a room with all the windows open. Each pupil brings a record of work done from home each morning and is issued time checks. A certain number of checks count as a per cent on the pupil s general average, and when he can present enough checks to amount to a school day he is entitled to a holiday; while for unexcused tardiness or absence he forfeits his credits. The plans is certainly new; and any scheme that persuades children to learn from their parents about cooking, sewing, home chores and personal health is well worth while.

## WHY WE NEED RURAL HIGH SCHOOLS.

At one of the sessions of Rural School Education Week, held in July at Austin under the auspices of the University of Texas, Mr. Shelby of the State Department of Education gave some facts and figures that point only too clearly the need in Texas of Rural High Schools. He said: "Only 23,208 white children of scholastic age were enrolled in high school subjects during the scholastic year of 1909-10. Of the 4,609 white graduates reported, only 859 were from High Schools in rural districts —or thirteen out of every ten thousand. There are several reasons why high school opportunities will never come to the vast majority of country boys and girls except through the establishment of rural high schools. In most instances parents are financially unable to support their children in schools away from home. Furthermore, the child's services are needed in the home during the hours when the school is not in session. And, again, the child, if sent to town to board, must leave home at an age when he most stands in need of parental care and control."

If, however, every farmer were abel to spend the money to send his children to the cities for their high school work, and if there were no danger to the child in being thus away from home, there would still be need of the high school in the country. For the great service of a school is not, after all, the formal lessons in the three R's. Its prime service is nearer kin to that of the church—to knit together the community interests of a district, to break down a selfish individual spirit, to lead its people to combine for the good of all. The school needs to be near enough to the homes of its patrons for them to be reminded that it is there to serve them and for them to serve.

It is the purpose of the University of Texas to publish as soon as possible all the addresses and papers delivered during Rural School Week. Many of these papers are able presentations of the latest thought about education for country boys and girls. As soon as this bulletin is available, it will be sent free upon application to any citizen of the State, and will prove an invaluable hand book to parents, to school trustees, to teachers, and to people interested in education from philanthropic matives. Send in your names, and the bulletin will be forwarded free of cost.

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Mr. Kern of Illinois told his audiences at Rural Education Week at the University of Texas to study everything they could find that might throw light upon the rural school problem; and then adapt, not adopt. The country school right now is the victim of a slavish adoption of methods designed to fit the needs of the city school.

## THE CALL OF THE OPEN COUNTRY.

Mr. J. R. Kern, of Winnebago County, Illinois, in talking on "The Call of the Open Country" before one of the gatherings of Rural Educational Week, held lately at Austin under the auspices of the University of Texas, said that the day has passed when the farmer will consent merely to be the creator of the food supply for the crowded population of the city. To feed the hungry is a noble calling; but there is no logic in the old proposition of the farmer who bought more land to raise more corn to feed more hogs to make more money to buy more land to raise more corn—and so on endlessly. The farmer now makes more money that he may be able to give his family the best that modern civilization offers. He believes that his children have a right to good schools, good high schools, well-fitted and beautiful school buildings, college-trained teachers and modern and attractive homes. If the farmer's boy can not get these things at home, he goes to the city for them, and there he usually stays; and the nation's great breeding ground for strong and able men and women—the open country—is drained thus of a fatally large number of its best youth.

Of course, not every boy and girl raised in the country should stay there—for the country's sake. But every wide-awake boy and girl who would normally stay on the farm should not be virtually forced away, but should find life there made livable by the same advantages and conveniences as has the average city home. In concluding, Mr. Kern said that he believed that the County Superintendent of Schools faces the greatest opportunity for service of any officer in the United States; not only the opportunity to train, in the boys and girls, the coming generation of farmers and farmers' wives, but the opportunity to be now the friend and leader of the present generation of country men and women in their effort to bring all the best of modern life into the life of the open country.

## TO PUT A COUNTY ON THE EDUCATIONAL MAP.

A point stressed again and again by the speakers during Rural School Education Week, held in July at the University of Texas by the State County Superintendents and other educators, is the necessity for the school to hook up its work, to tie itself fast to the fundamental things of life, particularly to the life of its own community. A school house is no longer a place apart from the world where a lad goes to make himself a book-worm or a student. Of course, the multiplication table is the multiplication table, and must be mastered as just that; but arithmetic can be applied to the crops in the near-by field or the number of pounds of butter fat yielded by the family cow. Geography can be studied in the home fields; language lessons can sometimes be about our common birds. And it isn't bad training in science to learn first hand the local insect pests or to breed better seed. Thus the school becomes a natural part of the child's and his parents' life. The child is helped to develop the interests that are already a part of its life; not wrenched violently out of his home and thrust into a foreign place called hool.

We seem just to be learning, for example, that a country boy has a real right to a school that shares his interests—not one that mimics—usually very badly—a plan that has been worked out to fit the needs of the city boy. It is hardly a matter for surprise that the country boy has gone to the city by thousands when his own school was designed, seemingly, to draw his interests away by teaching him about everything under the sun except the things of the home farm. And any County School Superintendent can put his county on the educational map who will solve his problem of welding the interests of each section of his county to its own little district school.